



The influence of cognitive processes on rural landholder responses to climate change

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Abstract:

Global climate change modelling has identified south-east Australia as a 'hot spot' for more frequent climatic extremes. Rural landholders may be vulnerable to the risks climate change presents. Australia's rural landholders are considered highly adaptable, with a history of responding to climatic uncertainty and variability. Yet it is possible that some of their adaptations will not be effective in reducing vulnerability, and may have downstream impacts. Rural landholder decision making is complex, and this is one of a limited number of papers examining rural landholder responses to climate change and the factors influencing their decisions. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and a mail survey of rural landholders in two districts. Established socio-psychological scales were employed to measure beliefs, values and attitudes that are expected to shape landholder behaviour. Most of the rural landholders surveyed were not climate change 'deniers' with 70% agreeing that the climate is changing and that human activity is a major influence. Climate change was nominated as an influence on six adaptive behaviours by 50% or more of survey respondents. However, there were no significant relationships between belief in climate change and adaptive actions. Personal values and worldviews were found to be the most frequent factors linked to adaptive behaviour. These findings illustrate the complex nature of rural landholder decision making: suggesting that many rural landholders do not need convincing of the existence of climate change; and that efforts to motivate rural landholders to respond to climate change risks should be based on sound knowledge of their values and worldviews.

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Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Other Communication Audience: Rural Landholders

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Security, Food/Water Security, Temperature

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Extreme Weather Event: Drought, Flooding

Food/Water Security: Agricultural Productivity, Livestock Productivity

Temperature: Extreme Heat

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Rural

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Other Vulnerable Population: Rural communities

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified